

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED before the Right Honourable the

Lord MAYOR,

THE
COURT of ALDERMEN,

AND

LIVERIES of the Several
COMPANIES of LONDON,

In the Parish CHURCH of

St. LAWRENCE JEWRY,

On *Friday, Sept. 29, 1752.*

Being the Day of ELECTION of a Lord
MAYOR for the Year ensuing.

By WILLIAM ROMAN, LL. B.

Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Lord MAYOR.

L O N D O N, 

Printed for J. CLARKE, under the Royal Exchange.

A L S O P Mayor,

An Especial Court held on the Feast of Saint *Michael* the Archangel (that is to say) *Friday* the 29th Day of *September* 1752. And in the 26th Year of the Reign of King *George* the Second of *Great Britain* &c.

IT is order'd that the Thanks of this Court be given to the Reverend Mr. *Roman*, Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, for his Sermon preached this Day before this Court and the Liveries of the several Companies of this City, at the Parish Church of Saint *Lawrence Jewry*, before the Election of a Lord Mayor of this City for the Year ensuing. And that he be desired to print the same,



M A N.

TO THE

Right Hon. ROBERT ALSOP, Esq;

L O R D M A Y O R,

And the Worshipful the Court of Aldermen
of the City of *London*,

T H I S S E R M O N

Publish'd at their Request

Is, with the greatest Respect, dedicated,

by their most obedient and most oblig'd

humble Servant

WILLIAM ROMAN.

TO THE

Right Hon. ROBERT ALSTON, Esq;

LORD MAYOR,

And the Worshipful the Court of Aldermen
of the City of London,

THIS SERMON

Published at their Request

Is, with the greatest Respect, dedicated,

by their most obedient and most oblig'd

humble Servant

WILLIAM ROMAN.



St. MATTHEW v. 16.

Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.

THESE Words are Part of our Saviour's Sermon upon the Mount, and seem indeed more immediately directed to his Apostles; who were * "*to go and teach all Nations,*" and to shine forth as bright Examples, to direct the Rest of Mankind in the Ways of Salvation. But, as, on another Occasion, he said, "*† What I say unto You, I say unto all :*" So, in this Passage, the Words may justly be supposed as not only applicable to *Them*, but to be laid down as a Command equally to be observed by *All Those*, Who, at any Time act under God's

* Mat. xxviii. 19.

† Mark xiii. 37.

Authority; “ * *Whether They be Kings as
 “ supreme, or Governors, as they that are sent
 “ by him for the Punishment of Evil Doers,
 “ and for the Praise of them that do well.”*
 They will therefore, I presume, afford us
 very proper Matter for our present Conside-
 ration.

BUT, before I proceed: It may not be
 amiss, by the Way, to clear the *Text* of an
 Objection of it's being a *seeming* Contradic-
 tion to the Words of our Saviour in the Be-
 ginning of the next Chapter, and in the
 same Divine Discourse on the Mount; where
 it is said, “ † *Take Heed that you do not
 “ your Alms before Men, to be seen of
 “ them; Sound not a Trumpet before Thee,
 “ as the Hypocrites do: Let not thy Left
 “ Hand know, what thy Right Hand doeth,
 “ when Thou doest thine Alms: Pray not
 “ standing in the Streets: &c.”* by observ-
 ing, that there is a wide Difference, as
 much as between *Active* and *Passive*, be-

* 1 Pet. ii. 13.

† Matt. vi. 1, 2, 3, &c.

tween the Words in the Original, one Passage importing that They, that is, Men * *may see*, in order to promote the Glory of God.—The other importing, that, They themselves † *may be seen*, that is, gazed at, and admired by Men, in Order to advance their *Own* Glory. The Precept then, here given, of letting the Public *see* our Good Actions, is by no Means a Contradiction to those *seemingly* different Expressions of our Saviour, where He takes Occasion only to reprove the Vain Ostentation of Those Hypocrites, whose *chief Motive* to the doing of any Thing that was Good, was, that they might be taken Notice of, and pointed at, and marked out, as better Men than their Neighbours; and so thereby gain Credit, and Applause, and Admiration to their *own* Persons, *God's Glory*, or, the *Good of Mankind* being quite out of the Question, and the least in their Thoughts.

* Matt. v. 16. ὥπως ἴδωσιν.

† Matt. vi. 1. πρὸς τὸ θαυμάζειν.

HAVING premis'd thus much to shew the *true* Meaning of the Words, by reconciling Them with the other *seemingly* contradictory Passages: I shall proceed to shew the Excellency of *Good Works*, and their being *seen* of Men, under such several Views and Considerations, as may best answer the purpose of the present Meeting together of this *Honourable Assembly*. And, in order thereto, I shall consider the Words of the Text as affording the *two* following Propositions.

FIRST, That, the *Lives and Actions* of Men of *Eminence*, and in *Authority*, of whatsoever Degree, (which is here expressed by the Metaphor *Light*) will be look'd on, will be scann'd, and will be imitated by Those below Them: And, Their *Light*, tho' a *malignant One*, will *shine*; and have Its Influence, tho' a *bad One*.

SECONDLY, That, seeing This is *So*: *Such Men* ought to take an especial Care, that their *Lives*, and *Actions*, their *Precepts* and

and *Examples* be such, as may redound to the Good of Men, and consequently to the Honour of God: That is, in the Words of the Text, that “ *Their Lights may So shine before Men, that They may see their good Works, and glorify their Father which is in Heaven.*”

FIRST then, I am to shew: That, the *Lives* and *Actions* of Men of Eminence and in Authority, of whatsoever Degree, (which is here expressed by the Metaphor *Light*) will be looked on, will be scanned, and will be imitated by Those below Them: And their *Light*, tho’ a *malignant One*, will *shine*, and have Its Influence, tho’ a *bad One*.

THE first Question that naturally occurs to the Minds of Men who are to be directed and led by Others, will be, * *Who made thee a Ruler and a Judge?* or, † *by what Authority doest thou these Things?* and *Who gave Thee this Authority?* They will not

* Acts vii. 27.

† Mark xi. 28.

be reduced to Subjection, and brought quietly to obey, 'till they are in some Measure satisfied in this Point, and, when that is once done, and they are convinced of the Authority and Merits of their Governors, They are, tho' perhaps not sufficiently attentive to their *Precepts*, yet ready enough to follow their *Examples*. In short, the Bulk of Mankind seem not very capable of Deductions from Reason, or, at least, too indolent to give Themselves the Trouble to examine by *Its* Rules what is right and what is wrong: Before what they *hear*, can produce any Effect, it must be considered and digested, and therefore will be a Matter of Trouble. They chuse rather to *walk by sight*. The *Eye* is a Member the quickest of Sense, the easiest entertain'd, and readiest to observe (where *Light* is not wanting) any Objects that strike upon It. This may be One Reason why the Generality of Mankind are so apt to be captivated with empty Shew, false Splendor and Blaze. And if they can defend Themselves by the Eminence and Authority of
of

of those that lead the Way, they then proceed without Fear, and borrow a fancied Security from their following the Steps of those that go before them. Hence, Authority is *that* which guides Men even in Actions where it is not directly concern'd. This is a Deference which is always paid to the Opinions, and more especially to the Practices of Men of Power and Eminence of whatsoever Degree. Let the Man then, whose Business it is to judge and direct and condemn Others, beware how He * *becomes inexcusable by doing the same Things*, and in condemning Others, condemn Himself; and, which is worse, at the same Time lose All the Good Effects, tho' not the bad Ones, which his Authority might produce. For the true and useful Spirit of Power is broken and gone, and Its Influence of no farther Use than to create Obstinacy in the Offender, and furnish out a Precedent, and Prescription for Wickedness, when, according to the Satyrist, the reprov'd Libertine can retort to his Censurer and Accuser.

* Rom. ii. 1.

* *Catalina Cethegum*? or when, in plain English, the Criminal can return, even so much as in Thought, upon Him that sitteth on the Seat of Justice, why so severe upon Me, and not first *Look at Home*? Such Men's *Light* then, that is, their *Lives* and *Actions* will be an unhappy Guidance to, will be imitated, and will be followed by Those below Them. If therefore, *that Light which is in them* be a *Malignant* one, how fatal is like to be it's Influence? It will prove as an *Ignis fatuus* to lead out of the Way into the Pond and into the Pit, instead of directing in the right Way; it will shine as *Saturn*, or the *Dog Star*, with the unhappy Power of bringing *Malignant Distempers* and *Diseases* on Men, rather than as the † *Sun with healing in his Wings*, or as ‡ *the Day Spring from on high, to enlighten their Paths, and guide their Feet into the Way of Peace.*

* Juv. Sat. 2.

† Luke i. 78, 79.

‡ Mal. iv. 2.

SEEING therefore that these Things are
So :

SUCH Men ought to take an especial Care,
that their *Lives* and *Actions*, their *Precepts*
and *Examples* be such, as may redound to
the Good of Men, and consequently to the
Honour of God: That is, in the Words of the
Text, that “ *their Lights may So shine before*
“ *Men, that They may see their good Works,*
“ *and glorify their Father which is in Heaven.*”

Now, as All Bodies, which have any
Proportion or Degree of Light or Brightness
in them, cannot but scatter abroad their Rays
and diffuse their Light around them, and
all other Bodies within their Sphere will, tho’
at a Distance, yet, in Proportion to their
Distance and the Force of those Bodies that
act upon Them, be affected and influenc’d
by Them: So, a *Good Example*, in a Reli-
gious Sense, is as * *a Light shining in a dark*
Place, a Light to lighten the rest of Mankind,
’tis as † *a Lantern unto their Feet and a*
Light unto their Paths, and thus does the

* 2 Pet. i. 19.

† Ps. cxix. 105.

Apostle writing to the *Phil. ii. 15.* use the same Word, when he exhorts them *to be blameless and harmless in the Midst of a crooked and perverse Generation, among whom he tells them, that they shone as Lights in the World,* and Our Saviour, after representing to his Disciples, and thro' them to all Governors and Teachers the Impossibility of their Actions not being observ'd and follow'd, by the Similitude of * *a City being situated upon an Hill, which cou'd not be hid,* and the Improbability thereof by that of a *lighted Candle put under a Busbel,* which is an Absurdity even to suppose, adds immediately in the following Words, and those of the Text, *Let your Lights So shine before Men, that they may see your good Works &c.* that is, Let the exemplary good Conduct of Men of Eminence, and the Effects of the Religion they profess, be so laid open before Men, as may convince them of the *Honesty* of their *Hearts*, and that they are in earnest themselves in what they direct and recommend to others, and so prove the happy Occasion, while they behold their

* Matt. v. 14, 15.

good Conversation and wise Deportment, of inducing Them to leave the dark Paths of Vice, and follow those where the Virtue of their Superiors affords Them *Light*. And indeed, what may not Men that are under Authority, with very good Reason look for from those that are set over Them? May they not justly expect in Such, *Wisdom* to direct, *Watchfulness* to preserve, *Integrity* and *Independency* to persevere, above the mean Inducements of either the Hopes of Advantage, or the Fears of the Contrary? Will they not look for Such Men as * *fear God, Men of Truth, hating Covetousness*, which is the Character of those whom *Moses* is advised in the Book of *Exodus* to set over the People of *Israel*. Such Men are in their proper place when set upon high, and under Such good Laws (which we know, are but a dead Letter without it) will be put in Execution, and are in no Danger of being perverted, as they may be, by Those who exercise Them unfaithfully, to the Means of Cruelty and Oppression. Under Such the Poor and Innocent will no more despair of Justice, than the Guilty, tho' Great, will dare even to hope for Pardon. In a

* Exod. xviii. 21.

Word, inspirited by the Example, and encouraged by the Authority of *Such Men*, every good Work, every Thing that is commendable and praise-worthy will not fail to flourish and abound, *to the Discouragement of Wickedness and Vice, and the Maintenance of true Religion and Virtue.* Let the Infidel and empty Scoffer at Religion look up and admire such bright Examples, and let Him own that * *the Throne is established by Righteousness*, and the Magistracy maintain'd by administering true Judgment, and *that Sin is a Reproach to any People.*

AND, if It be allowed, as certainly it must, that the Christian Religion is the best adapted for the Ends and Preservation of Civil Government, That will naturally lead Us to consider, how truly it's Precepts, and how strictly it's Doctrines are observed by the Generality of Mankind. How then is the Lord their God worshipped among them? How is his Name hallowed? How are his Sabbaths kept, or, rather, how are they broken? Is not our

Sunday become more like unto an Heathen Festival, than a Christian Sabbath sacred to the Memory of our Creation and Redemption?—And to go through the whole Decalogue, what Disobedience to Parents? What Murders? What Whoredoms and Adulteries? What Covetings and Cravings after other Men's Goods do We daily hear of? Enough, one would think to make Men sick of such Abominations! But, This is but too surely the Case: Drink, Diversion and Debauchery in some Measure divide the Land.---How stuffed and crowded are the Houses of *Baal*, whilst the Temples of the true God are in a Manner deserted! And if this be not altered, *What shall be in * the End thereof?* And how shall it be altered?—why—Let not the Sword be born in vain.---All Ecclesiastical Censure we know, is either become a By-word, and laughed to scorn, or looked upon and cried out against as Spiritual Tyranny or Popish Priest Riding. The sole Power then being translated to the Civil Arm, let it not sleep, let it not be neglected. But let our Governors and Magistrates, from the Least to the Great-

* Jer. v. 31.

est,

est, be careful and diligent (for to This were they appointed) in the Execution of our Good and wholesome Laws, which are adapted almost to every Malady and Mischief: Let them be *zealous for the Lord of Hosts*, that his Sabbaths be not broken and polluted; Let them be jealous of the Honour of his Name, that it be not defiled and abused. In short, let all Wickedness meet with it's due Discouragement, and let the Example of the better Sort, as we call Them, (a good Example more powerful than every Restraint) Let that be added by Those of Eminence, and in Authority: So, shall their good *Lives and Actions*, their *Precepts and Examples* "*shine forth before Men, that they*" "*seeing their good Works, may glorify their*" "*Father which is in Heaven.*"

THUS we see the Necessity and Excellency of *Good Works* being manifested in Those, who by Authority are set over Us.

BUT, before I conclude this Discourse; I shall beg leave to make a short Reflecti-

on or two necessarily arising from what has been here advanced.

AND now, if the Happiness of a Community has so great a Dependance, as it doubtless has, upon the *Lives* and *Actions*, the *Precepts* and *Examples* of Those who are set over it; How noble is the Employ, how lovely is the Character of those who being exalted on high, and set above their Brethren, have a Will and Steadiness equal to their Power and Opportunity of extending this so universal a Benefit to the general Good of Mankind!

If the Satisfaction arising from the Consciousness of having done one good Action is so great, that it will give that substantial Joy, which none but Minds disposed to Goodness can conceive: How sublimated and improved must that Satisfaction be, which they enjoy, who extensively diffuse the good Effects of this happy Disposition through *this great Metropolis, this City set upon an Hill*, to whose Actions all inferior

rior Cities and Towns look up and give great Heed; and which whole Multitudes do see, and must rejoice in the Consequences of them?

Now as the Exquifiteness of this most exalted Satisfaction is better felt than described, I shall in this Place wave any farther Attempt of that kind, as well knowing that *the present worthy Magistrate* need but look into his own Breast to be more surely convinced of it. I shall therefore only add, that those, who have not as yet had Opportunity of making the same Experiment, will, I hope, whenever they arrive at that *high Station*, learn from the *Good Example* now before them to *do likewise*, that is, to act as *Men of Truth hating Covetousness*, carrying the Fear of God only before their Eyes, being *Free and Independant*, having nothing to ask of those above them, and nothing to fear from those below them. And that *such* may always be *Our Magistrates*, God of his infinite Mercy grant.

Now to God the Father, &c.

F I N I S.

